

## Why Centralization?\*

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It is a truism of (diachronic) biblical scholarship that one of the main contrasts between the sources – or redactors – of the Pentateuch lies in their approach to the centralization of the cult: J and E know nothing about it, D vehemently demands it, and P assumes it. Indeed, polemic against diffuse worship is seen as a primary defining feature of D – and, by extension, of the Deuteronomistic composition (Dtr) that continues and concludes the Pentateuchal narrative. Based on strong evidence that the sacrificial cult of YHWH was indeed mostly centralized in the Second Temple period – and that the degree of centralization increased over that time<sup>1</sup> – these supposedly contrasting attitudes have been used to position the sources or redactors chronologically. J and E were seen as originating centuries before centralization was actually attested on the ground, deep in the pre-exilic period, D was pronounced late post-exilic (and, as we shall presently discuss, associated in particular with the cultic reform allegedly conducted by King Josiah of Judah in the late sixth century BCE), Dtr was localized in the exilic or early post-

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exilic period, and P well after the exile.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the present article is to challenge this seemingly elegant schema by demonstrating that the differences summarized above are largely illusory. This, in turn, has important *Religionsgeschichte* implications.

Let me begin by acknowledging that Deuteronomy indeed goes somewhere no other Pentateuchal text does, namely, states explicitly that sacrifices of every kind can only be made “at the place that YHWH your God will choose from all your tribes to place there his name” (12:5; cf. 12:11, 13-14, 17-18, 26-27). In what looks like a forceful affirmation of this principle, in Joshua 22 Cisjordanian tribes nearly go to war with their Transjordanian siblings after hearing that the latter erected their own altar and only relent upon receiving assurances that it is not, and never was, intended for actual sacrifices. In 1 Kings 3, the narrator qualifies the statement that initially “Solomon loved YHWH, walking in accordance with the statutes of his father David,” by adding that the king “would make sacrifices and burn incense upon high places (במות, *bāmôt*)” (v. 3). Similar caveats are entered with regard to Asa (1 Kgs 15:14), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:44), Jehoash (2 Kgs 12:4), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:4), Azariah (2 Kgs 15:4), and Jotham (2 Kgs 15:35). And when Jeroboam I founds new sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:26-29, 31-33), a “man of God” roundly denounces him and predicts that the altar in Bethel will be destroyed and its priests slaughtered (1 Kgs 13:1-6; the narrator echoes the condemnation in 1 Kgs 12:30; 13:33-34).

Yet, when the prophet Elijah does something very similar, the response could not be more different, both in the story and at the narratorial level. In 1 Kings 18, as a part of the contest he initiates with the prophets of Baal and Asherah, Elijah builds his own altar on Mount Carmel and

offers a bull upon it (vv. 30-35). This time, not only does the narrator fail to voice any disapproval of what in terms of Deuteronomy 12, Joshua 22, and 1 Kings 12-13 would look like a patently illegitimate act, but also the deity itself undeniably concurs by sending fire down on the altar and thus accepting the sacrifice (v. 38). Moreover, in the next chapter Elijah complains to YHWH – on Mount Horeb (=Sinai) no less – about Ahab and Jezebel destroying the deity’s altars (1 Kgs 19:14; in 18:30, Elijah builds in Carmel on the ruins of a previously demolished altar). It does not seem to occur either to the character or to the narrator that such a destruction may in fact be a highly commendable act.<sup>3</sup>

This is by no means an isolated episode but rather a part of larger trend – one that is even more pronounced than the opposition to cultic diffusion traced above. From Joshua through the beginning of Kings, the people of Israel are shown worshipping YHWH at nine different locations - Gilgal (Josh 5:10; 1 Sam 11:14-15), Shiloh (Josh 18:1; Judg 18:31; 1 Samuel 1-4), Shechem (Josh 24:1), Ophrah (Judges 6), Mizpah (Judg 20:1; 21:8; 1 Sam 7:5-9; 10:17), Bethel (Judg 20:18, 23, 26-28; 21:2-4), Ramah (1 Sam 9:12-14), Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6), and Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:4). In none of these cases is there a single peep of protest from the narrator – not even in 1 Samuel 14 where Saul improvises an altar right on the battlefield, seemingly with the sole purpose of preventing his troops from eating with blood (vv. 31-35). On the contrary, visiting the sites that I have just listed is routinely described along the lines of “going to YHWH” or “reporting to YHWH” (Josh 24:1; Judg 20:1, 23, 26; 21:2, 8; 1 Sam 1:3; 7:6). Moreover, the deity implicitly validates at least some of them by speaking there (Judg 20:18, 23, 28), describing the sacrifices made there as its own (1 Sam 2:29), or forcefully responding to them (1 Sam 7:7-10). And, in what may look like a glaring contradiction, right after

seemingly expressing regret about Solomon (and his subjects) still making sacrifices at “high places” (1 Kgs 3:2-3) the narrator has YHWH appear to the king and even promise to grant his wish after Solomon makes a thousand sacrifices at the “great high place” of Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:4-15). If the deity is successfully propitiated by worship at a “high place,” what can be possibly wrong with such worship?

The notice in 1 Kgs 3:2 that the people were still making sacrifices at the “high places” in the beginning of Solomon’s reign because “in those days the house for YHWH’s name had not yet been built” may seem to suggest that in the narrator’s mind it was the construction of the Jerusalem temple that rendered diffuse worship intolerable. Yet, this does not explain why Elijah’s altar was OK while Jeroboam’s was not if both were erected with the Temple already in place – not to mention that according to the multiple comments quoted above its existence made no differences as far as the people’s cultic practices were concerned.

In this regard, it is instructive that the deity’s attitude towards Solomon making sacrifices at the “high places” undergoes a dramatic change between 1 Kings 3 and 1 Kings 11 not because the Temple is built meanwhile but because the object of worship changes. In chap. 3, there is no indication that the king worships anyone but YHWH – indeed, the comment in v.3 that Solomon “loved YHWH” makes it all but impossible to speculate otherwise. As already mentioned, the deity’s response is overwhelmingly positive. In chap. 11, Solomon explicitly builds high places for Kemosh, Molech, and other foreign deities (1 Kgs 11:7-8); as a result, YHWH is incensed and decides to punish the king by drastically truncating his kingdom (1 Kgs 11:9-13). The narrator’s assessment also turns from ambiguous to strongly negative, with the king’s practices labeled “evil” (1

Kgs 11:6). In other words, it is syncretism that makes all the difference, not diffusion.

The same pattern can be also traced with regard to the altars of Elijah and Jeroboam. The prophet builds it in a bid to demonstrate that all deities but YHWH are false; he fights syncretism rather than practicing it. The king, by contrast, installs golden calves as the objects of worship in Bethel and Dan, reprising the paradigmatic idolatry of Exodus 32 (1 Kgs 12:28-32).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, when the prophet Ahijah proclaims Jeroboam's doom, he quotes YHWH as saying that the king "made himself other gods and molten idols... and turned his back on [YHWH]" (1 Kgs 14:9) – not that he worshipped YHWH in a wrong place.

On a larger scale, a similar contrast can be traced between the occasions on which the narrator chooses to criticize diffuse worship and those on which he passes it in silence. In the latter cases, there is no indication of any deity but YHWH being worshipped at the site; it is true even of Saul's ad hoc altar in 1 Samuel 14. The attitude turns negative only when foreign cults are involved. In Josh 22:17, Cisjordanian tribes bring up the "sin of Peor" – that is, worship of Baal-peor reported in Numbers 25 – when denouncing the Transjordanian altar. In Judges 6, the deity wants an altar in Ophrah destroyed (v. 25) because Baal and Asherah are worshipped there, not because it is in the wrong place – as clearly demonstrated by the command to erect an altar of YHWH on the same spot (v.26), not to mention the tacit approval of Gideon's spontaneously built YHWH-Shalom shrine (v. 24). In 1 Kgs 14:22-24, Rehoboam's Judah is described as "doing what was wrong in YHWH's eyes and making him jealous to a greater degree than their fathers had done, through the transgressions they had committed" because what they built "upon every high elevation and under every shady tree" included not only

“high places and pillars” but also אַשְׁרִים (*’ăšērîm*)— that is, sacred poles of Asherah – not to mention their employing קַדְשִׁים (*qādēšîm*) in violation of Deut 23:18 and “acting in accordance with all the abominations of the nations that YHWH had dislocated before the children of Israel.” (The next chapter further elaborates that Asherah was worshipped even within the royal family and that idols were manufactured, vv. 12-13.)

Likewise with the moralizing farewell to the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kings 17. It does accuse its residents of “building for themselves ‘high places’ in all their towns, from a guard tower to a fortified city” without saying who was actually worshipped there (v. 9b). However, the charge is suggestively bookended by accusations that the people “feared other gods” (v. 7b) and that they “erected for themselves pillars and אַשְׁרִים (*’ăšērîm*) – on every high hill and under every shady tree” (v. 10). Likewise, the reference to “burning incense there, on all the ‘high places’” (v. 11) is immediately followed by the statement that the Northern Kingdom “served droppings”<sup>5</sup> (v. 12; in vv. 16-17 Jeroboam’s practices are mentioned at the same breath as worship of Asherah, Baal, and astral deities). The implication is that in the North diffuse cult was tightly and inextricably interwoven with syncretism.

The trend can be traced even in the formulaic expressions of regret that Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham, despite their overall pious disposition, failed to do away with the “high places.” In each of these cases, the narrator adds that “the people were still making sacrifices and burning incense on the ‘high places’” (1 Kgs 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35). This brings to mind Solomon’s wives “burning incense and making sacrifices” to their gods, such as Kemosh and Molech, on the “high places” that he built for them (1 Kgs 11:7-8). Admittedly,

the connection is tenuous, given that offering sacrifices and burning incense is what one would normally do at a cultic site, but the doggedness with which the narrator spells it out – the comment is absent only with regard to Asa, the king textually much more proximate to Solomon than all the others (1 Kgs 15:14) – cannot be ignored, especially given other evidence pointing in the same direction.

Finally, it is necessary to take a closer look at the two kings the Deuteronomist singles out as the best of the best – Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:5) and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25). About the former, we hear that he “removed the ‘high places’” (2 Kgs 18:4; the verb used is the same as in the references to previous kings failing to do this). However, the textual connection to foreign worship is again close and unmistakable: having reported the destruction of the high places, the narrator immediately adds that Hezekiah “shattered the pillars, and cut down Asherah, and broke the bronze serpent that Moses had made because up to those days the children of Israel burned incense to it.” In fact, the only one to claim that the cultic sites closed down by Hezekiah were dedicated to YHWH is Rabshakeh (2 Kgs 18:22) – an Assyrian who cannot be expected to understand the intricacies of Judean religious practices and a speaker with an obvious agenda who can be expected to spin facts and bend the truth for rhetorical purposes. And when Hezekiah’s son Manasseh rebuilds the “high places” he also starts making worshipping Baal, Asherah, and the “entire host of heaven” (2 Kgs 21:3; cf. vv. 4-7, 11).

Josiah’s religious reform has been regarded since at least Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette – in other words, for more than two centuries – as the flagship event of the Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic agenda with regard to cultic space. Indeed, it is considered yet another truism of scholarship that centralization of worship was the hallmark

of this reform as described in Kings and that consequently “the book of instruction” found in the Temple that supposedly inspired Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8-13) should be identified with Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup> However, if centralization is defined as prohibition on practicing the cult of YHWH outside the royal shrine in Jerusalem, it is not clear that the actual account of Josiah’s actions has much, if anything, to say on the subject.<sup>7</sup> We can start by noting that in the run-up to the reform the deity, speaking through the prophet Hulda, proclaims doom for Judah because “they abandoned [YHWH] and burned incense for other gods” (2 Kgs 22:17) – not because they worshipped YHWH in the wrong places. Accordingly, when Josiah rolls up his sleeves he seems to keep laser-sharp focus on syncretistic practices. Out of 18 verses that have the king eliminate something, ten unmistakably deal with eradication of foreign worship and associated practices in Jerusalem and Judah as a whole (2 Kgs 23:4-7, 10-14, 24) and four (vv. 15-18) with the destruction of the Bethel sanctuary (which, as discussed above, the narrator consistently identifies as syncretistic).

Just four verses can, but not necessarily have to, be interpreted as describing centralization of the cult of YHWH. In 2 Kgs 23:8-9, Josiah defiles the “high places” in Judean cities and brings the כהנים (*kōhānīm*) who “burned incense” there to Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> It is conceivable that these “high places” were local shrines of YHWH appropriately manned by descendants of Aaron. However, the text is also plausibly interpretable as referring to the same sanctuaries of Baal and astral deities as v. 5 (in which the “high places” in question are not destroyed yet) – and implying that the relocated כהנים (*kōhānīm*) were barred from the altar of YHWH in Jerusalem (and thus forced to subsist on matzos) as a punishment for their involvement in syncretism.<sup>9</sup> The latter option would become preferable if Lauren Monroe is

correct in emending שַׁעֲרִים (*šē‘ārîm*) ‘gates’ in v. 8 to שַׁעֲרֵי־מַדְבָּר (*šē‘îrîm*) ‘goat-demons’ (Lev 17:7).<sup>10</sup> The probability of the בְּחַיֵּי הַבְּמוֹת (*bātēy habāmôt*) that according to 2 Kgs 23:19-20 Josiah destroyed in the “towns of Samaria” being local sanctuaries of YHWH is much more remote. Notably, the term occurs elsewhere only in the context of syncretism practiced by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:31; 13:32) and non-Israelite settlers in the former Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 17:29, 32).<sup>11</sup> Even more suggestively, Josiah slaughters the priests of these sanctuaries – unlike those of the Judean “high places” (1 Kgs 23:20).

To sum up, in the four books of the Former Prophets – containing among them more than 4,000 verses and 147 chapters according to the Masoretic count – there is not a single unambiguous statement that worshipping YHWH in more than one place is unacceptable per se and not a single unambiguous precedent for elimination of such practices. Should we conclude therefore that whoever created the corpus was not, after all, a Deuteronomist worthy of the name? Not necessarily. Instead, we may want to take a long, hard look at our understanding of what modern scholarship sees as by far the most idiosyncratic plank of the Deuteronomic agenda.

We have already mentioned that every negative mention of diffuse worship in the Former Prophets is explicitly or implicitly linked to syncretism. Perhaps surprisingly but by no means illogically, so are the Deuteronomic stipulations concerning the centralization of the cult. The only text where such stipulations are found, Deut 12:4-28, is preceded by the order to destroy the cultic places of the Canaanite natives (vv. 2-3) and followed by a stern warning to avoid following the practices of these peoples (vv. 29-31) and by a whole chapter that mandates total extermination of everyone who promotes foreign

worship or engages in it. Verse 30 spells out the connection: “Be careful not to be ensnared after [the Canaanite natives] after they are exterminated from before you and *not to seek their gods*, saying ‘The way these peoples worshipped their gods, let me do so as well’” In other words, diffuse cult leads to syncretism.

Crucial in this respect is the gap between the implied and actual settings of Deuteronomy. In the text, Moses admonishes the people to stay out of trouble in the future and instructs them how exactly to do that. But if the book was put together in the Babylonian exile or after it – or even, as maintained by Wellhausen and his followers emerged in some form in the late pre-exilic period – for its intended audience it distilled the community’s past experience.<sup>12</sup> As reported by the Former Prophets, this experience teaches that it is very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to maintain strict monolatry in a diffuse cult. Eight kings of Judah out of the total of 19 successfully purged the royal temple and the capital from foreign worship, but only two of them – Hezekiah and Josiah – managed to achieve the same nationwide, in both cases only temporarily. The obvious reason is that it is hard to police which deity is actually worshipped at multiple local shrines, especially when the worshippers themselves are not quite aware of the difference between the storm gods named Baal (Lord) and YHWH (a.k.a. Adonai – the Lord). And the obvious solution is to eliminate all worship that is not under the monarch’s watchful eye.<sup>13</sup> In a similar fashion, what happens to Solomon in 1 Kings 11 justifies the restraints that Deuteronomy 17 places on the king of Israel.<sup>14</sup>

If so, for Deuteronomy cultic centralization is a means to an end, not a goal in itself. This pattern is by no means unique in the book. To cite just two examples, the king is prohibited from hoarding horses, precious metals,

and women not for its own sake but to prevent him from going astray (17:16-17), and the extermination of the Canaanites is urged so that they do not infect Israel with their practices (20:15-18).

With centralization of worship seen not as a theological principle in its own right but rather as a matter of practicality in preventing syncretism, what is seen in modern scholarship, especially of the diachronic variety, as perhaps the most distinctive feature of Deuteronomic theology largely dissipates. The entire Torah – nay, the entire Tanach – agrees that Israel should worship YHWH alone; the only difference with regard to Deuteronomy is that it points out the most efficient way to ensure this. And even that is a matter of the book's position within the broader corpus rather than idiosyncratic ideas operative in it. With the people traveling as a group – as is the case from Exodus through Numbers – it would be premature to discuss the possibility of diffuse worship and its consequences. Conversely, with Israel poised to enter Canaan and settle it – as is the case in Deuteronomy – such discussion becomes the order of the day. And with Deuteronomy's distinctiveness goes one of major obstacles to reading not only the Pentateuch, but also the entire Enneateuch (Genesis-Kings) the way it is written – not as an assemblage of sources and/or redactional layers but as an integral, if complex, composition.<sup>15</sup>

The conclusions reached here may also be instrumental in resolving a major, if largely unnoticed, paradox associated with emergence of monotheism. In the ancient world as a whole, and certainly in the ancient Near East, gods were often associated with specific locations (e.g., Marduk with Babylon, Inanna/Ishtar with Uruk, and Nanna/Sin with Ur in Mesopotamia; Re with Heliopolis, Amun with Thebes, and Bastet with Bubastis in Egypt). Yet,

there is no evidence that worshiping them elsewhere was frowned upon. Even if such prohibitions did exist, monotheism could be reasonably expected to discard them as undue, perhaps even blasphemous spatial constraints on the single deity. Yet, the actual historical developments initially went in the diametrically opposite direction: ancient Israelite monolatry and monotheism came hand in hand with increasingly strict restriction of cultus to a single, highly circumscribed location: the Jerusalem temple. What is more, although today the heirs to the religious tradition of ancient Israel – Jews, Christians, and Moslems – do agree that religious service can be performed anywhere, this only applies to the modes of worship, such as prayer or reading and study of sacred texts, that initially emerged as barely adequate substitutes for the offerings made in the temple.<sup>16</sup> If cultic centralization was a protective mechanism of sorts that allowed nascent monotheism to survive in the ocean of vibrant, well-established polytheistic cultures, this trajectory begins to make sense

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> As suggested, above all, by the late-sixth century correspondence (*ANET*, 491-92) in which both sides – the representatives of the Israelite/Jewish community of Elephantine in Egypt and the governors of Judah and Samaria – recognize the sanctuary of the god “Yaho” in Elephantine as legitimate provided that no animal sacrifices are made there.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Karl Heinrich Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments. Zwei historisch-kritische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1866), 1-113; Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der*

*historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History*, VTsup 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 81-88, 152, regards 1 Kings 17-19 as a post-Dtr insertion, in part because this “would help to explain the references to legitimate Yahwistic altars outside of Jerusalem in 18:30-32 and 19:14. Dtr would hardly have left these references unrevised” (87). The trouble with this explanation is that someone who did not accept Dtr’s stance on a major cultic issue would not be likely to voice his disagreement in such a feeble, barely noticeable way. Instead, it appears that it simply did not occur to whoever wrote these chapters that they contradict the rest of Deuteronomistic History in any way. Antony F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings: A Late Ninth-Century Document (1 Samuel 1 – 2 Kings 10)*, CBQMS 17 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1986), includes most of 1 Kings 18 – but not 1 Kings 19 – in a putative pre-Dtr “Prophetic Record.” In this regard, McKenzie’s comment quoted above is relevant: someone for whom it was “centralization or bust” would hardly include in his composition a story validating a makeshift altar on Mt. Carmel.

<sup>4</sup> Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, “Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves,” *JBL* 86.2 (1967): 129-40, find as many as 13 parallels between the golden calf episode in Exodus 32 and Jeroboam’s religious reform as described in 1 Kings 12. El, the chief god of the Canaanite pantheon, was routinely referred to as “Bull El” and represented by bovine figurines: see, e.g., William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 135-36.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew גללים (*gillulîm*), probably a scatological reference to foreign gods: see Daniel Bodi, “Les gillulîm chez Ézéchiel et dans l’Ancien Testament, et les différentes pratiques culturelles associées à ce terme,” *RB* 100.4 (1993): 481-510.

<sup>6</sup> As pointed out by Eberhard Nestle, “Miscellen,” *ZAW* 22.1 (1902): 170-71; 22.2 (1902): 312-13, already some of the church fathers were of this opinion. In 1963, H. H. Rowley confidently stated, “That Josiah’s Law Book was Deuteronomy in some form, though not wholly identified with the present book of Deuteronomy, seems to be one of the most firmly established results of Old Testament scholarship” (*Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy* [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963], 161. Almost twenty-five years later, Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 101, was even more categorical: “The book that the priest Hilkiyah said he found in the Temple in 622 B.C. was Deuteronomy.” The identification was long used to argue that Deuteronomy, or at least one of its pre-canonical versions (so-called *Urdeuteronomium*), existed already in the late seventh century BCE: e.g., Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette, *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Halle: Schimmelpfennig, 1806), 1:168–78; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies; Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 279-80; Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer-Verlag, 1957), 92–94; Norbert Lohfink, “Die Bundesurkunde des Königs Josias. (Eine Frage an die Deuteronomiumsforschung),” *Bib* 44.3 (1963): 261-88; 44.4 (1963): 461-98. Jack R. Lundbom, “The Lawbook of the Josianic Reform,” *CBQ* 38.3 (1976): 293–302, contended that although Josiah’s reform was inspired by “the prohibitions of Deut 1-

28” (300), the book found in the temple was nothing else than Deuteronomy 32. Philip R. Davies, *In Search of “Ancient Israel,”* JSOTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 40-41, rejected this reasoning as “a brilliant example of circularity” (40), and more recent publications for the most part eschew it: thus, views all connections between 2 Kings 22-23 and Deuteronomy as metatextual references. Still, Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 55, allows that “the first edition of Deuteronomy may well have been written under Josiah” even though “his reform was certainly not based on the discovery of a book” while Ernest Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and the Judaeon Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16-40, ascribes those lines of 2 Kings 23 that according to him describe cultic centralization to a post-exilic Deuteronomistic editor.

<sup>7</sup> Similarly Lauren Monroe, *Josiah’s Reform and the Dynamics of Defilement: Israelite Rites of Violence and the Making of a Biblical Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113. Importantly for our purposes here, she sees no interest in cultic centralization even in those parts of 2 Kings 23 that she identifies as post-exilic Deuteronomistic interpolations.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholson, *Deuteronomy*, 35-37, regards 2 Kgs 23:8-9 as a post-exilic Deuteronomistic addition; however, Monroe, *Josiah’s Reform*, 30-32, 79, sees here a pre-exilic priestly hand related to the putative Holiness stratum of the Pentateuch.

<sup>9</sup> Another possibility, pointed out by W. Boyd Barrick, *The King and the Cemeteries: Toward a New Understanding of Josiah’s Reform*, VTSup 88 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 187-96, is that we deal here with a “(re)ordination ritual of some sort” (192), comparable to Exod 29:1-37 and

Lev 8:22-28, 31-35. In Barrick's opinion, "[t]hat Yahweh was worshipped at the bamoth as at the Temple is evident from the fact that priests who had officiated there were incorporated into the priestly staff of the Temple by Josiah (2 Kgs. 23:9)" (185-86). Given that before Josiah's purge YHWH was worshipped alongside other deities even in the temple, it appears highly unlikely that syncretism was avoided elsewhere.

<sup>10</sup> Monroe, *Josiah's Reform*, 40-43.

<sup>11</sup> Barrick, "On the Meaning of בַּיִת־הַ/בְּמוֹת and בְּתֵי־הַבְּמוֹת and the Composition of the Kings History," *JBL* 115.4 (1996): 621-42 (622).

<sup>12</sup> As noted already by Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, *Studies in Biblical Theology* 9 (London: SCM, 1961), 70-71.

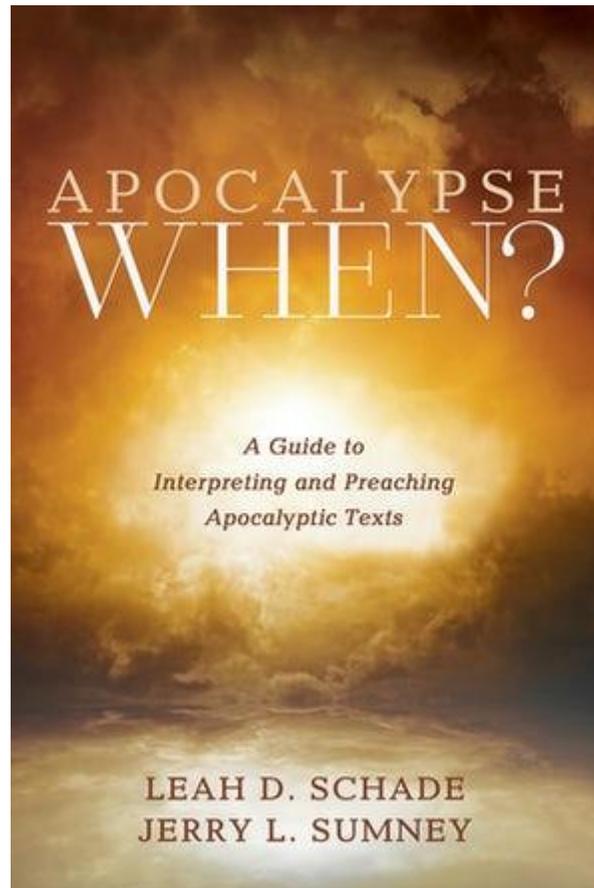
<sup>13</sup> Gary N. Knoppers, "The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship," *ZAW* 108.3 (1996): 329-46, convincingly argues that "the Deuteronomist's very criteria of assessing royal conduct are... predicated upon pervasive royal supervision and control of the cult" (346).

<sup>14</sup> Knoppers ("Deuteronomist," 343) maintains that "in condemning Solomon the Deuteronomist [does not cite] the *tradtum* of Dtn 17,16," but he seems to overlook the double echo of Deut 17:17 in 1 Kgs 11:3, 4. He also fails to notice that in the run-up to his apostasy Solomon goes the whole nine yards in violating the prohibitions of Deut 17:16-17: he hoards precious metals (1 Kgs 10:2, 10, 14-22, 25, 27), horses (10:26, 28-29), and women (11:1-3). Even the warning against sending the people back to Egypt to bring back horses (Deut 17:16) is explicitly disregarded (1 Kgs 10:28-29).

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Serge Frolov, *Judges*, FOTL 6b (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 333-46; Frolov, "Structure, Genre, and

Rhetoric of the Enneateuch.” *Vestnik SPbSU. Philosophy and Conflict Studies* 33.3 (2017): 354-63; Frolov, “Synchronic Readings of Joshua-Kings,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Brent A. Strawn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 344-47.

<sup>16</sup> In Islam, the Eid al-Adha festival includes animal sacrifice, but it is seen as a re-enactment of Genesis 22, not a continuation of temple offerings.



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